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The Louvain Library Controversy

"Europe Temporibus Diversis: Diversis Americanis Respirans"

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THE LOUVAIN LIBRARY CONTROVERSY

The Misadventures of an American Artist

or

"Furore Teutonico Diruta:
Dono Americano Restituta"

by

PIERRE DE SOETE
Belgian Sculptor

1929

RUMFORD PRESS

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Pierre DeSoete, Belgian sculptor at work on the bust of Cardinal Mercier which now adorns the exterior of the Library.

To the American Public and the Subscribers to the Louvain Library

The incidents connected with the inscription for the balustrade on the new library at Louvain have drawn attention throughout the United States and Belgium, indeed the Press of the whole world has published accounts of the controversy.

Unfortunately the Press has not always been furnished with the underlying facts nor even the exact details which brought about the conflict.

Having personally witnessed that conflict from its inception, I deem it my duty to set them forth in the name of truth and to state briefly the reasons why Cardinal Mercier's inscription should appear upon the building.

It is to the American people therefore that I address myself, both as a Belgian citizen and as an artist, and purpose setting forth without bias the attitude of that American citizen who was charged with the duty of perpetuating upon the building itself the history of its destruction and rebuilding, and also the untoward circumstances which have resulted from the fact that he listened only to the voice of his conscience as a man and an artist for the sake of truth and in order that the wish of the late Cardinal should be respected.

Pierre de Soete
(Belgian sculptor)

March 1929
9 Rue de Ligne
Bruxelles.

97949

PROVINCIAL LIBRARY,
VICTORIA, B.C.

"Furore Teutonico Diruta: Dono Americano Restituta"

When the now celebrated inscription, reproduced above, was delivered by the late Cardinal Mercier, to Mr. Whitney Warren, at their first meeting, no one would have thought it would be the cause of the flowing of so much ink nor that it would be the object of so much controversy. Despite the specious arguments of the German professor Meurer it has been authoritatively established that Louvain was burned for no strategic reason and was the seat of a display of barbaric acts emulating if not surpassing the atrocious deeds of the Middle Ages. The admirable account by Prof. Mayence published in the July 1928 number of "Current History" has proved it in no doubtful manner. Mr. Fuglister, a Swiss literary man, who witnessed the horrors of Louvain has dwelt upon the subject in many of his lectures and his book "Louvain, Ville Martyre" has never been even attempted to be contradicted. The pretended existence of "francs-tireurs" was but a German invention, another instance of German bad faith and of her eagerness to find any excuse: was the confession of a fear to assume responsibility before the world for her crimes of 1914.

The United States having answered Belgium's appeal by reconstructing the Library, we Belgians can now pride ourselves on being possessed of a most artistic monument. Why then should effort be made to take away the spiritual beauty of that monument — the testimony of its history — the setting forth of the impelling cause of America's gift. Louvain's library has been reconstructed by an American

gesture impelled by pity for the lost architectural gem and for the manner of its losing — to heal the hurt so savagely done. When Cardinal Mercier came to America he was asked what could be done for Belgium. He made his distressful appeal for the restoration to Belgium of its destroyed temple, the Library of Louvain, dear to his spirit. America understood the anguish of the great prelate and a nation-wide movement was started to alleviate it. Not only large and generous contributors, but thousands of people eager to help — in measure commensurate with their possibilities — responded. It was America at large stirred by the spirit of mercy, which spontaneously furnished as well her moral as her financial support, and the people of Belgium are profoundly thankful to her and proudly bear testimony to their gratitude. The gift of America has blessed both those who gave and us who have received. The Academy of Fine Arts, and the Institute of France to whom the selection of an architect was confided, chose Mr. Whitney Warren to undertake the reconstruction. Mr. Widor, the permanent secretary of the Institute advised Mr. Warren of the choice which had been made. A sensitive modesty restrained him from immediate acceptance. The task, of worthily replacing a vanished monument of art, of giving to Belgium an edifice worthy of America might well give pause. Cardinal Mercier urged Mr. Warren to undertake it as a duty to art and to both countries. He asked him to come to see him at Malines. At that interview he expressed his fear of never seeing the consummation of the project and besought him not alone to design and plan the building, but to undertake the personal supervision of the construction. Sharing that deep admiration for the Cardinal in which all the firm and gentle of the world participate, Mr. Warren accepted the mission, promised his whole coöperation and assured his Eminence that he should have a new, and so far as lay in his power a beautiful library, embodying the spiritual atmosphere he so devoutly wished. An interview took place to select the site. The architect was of the opinion that the site of the destroyed library was not

large enough for the projected building and a site on the Place du Peuple was selected. The Cardinal had voiced his desire to see upon the monument such an inscription as would constitute for the future *a safeguard against the recurrence of similar destructions* and desired that it be sufficiently in evidence to avoid the possible result of insignificance. Discussion took place how in few words to embody history, teach a lesson, safeguard the future and testify to Belgium's gratitude. These were the points the Cardinal desired should be covered. Suggestions were made and considered. Finally the learned Canon Thiéry, who was present, embodied the Cardinal's thought in classic form and submitted it to the Cardinal. The wording was brief yet every desired element appeared. The Cardinal after deep thought accepted it as the just presentation of the spiritual lesson to be conveyed. He handed it to the architect and asked him to have it placed upon the front of the building. This Mr. Warren agreed to, saying "We will crown the Building with a balustrade and entwine in it this inscription as is done on the Château de Josselin in France." Monseigneur Ladeuze, Rector, and Monseigneur Deploige, Secretary of the International Commission for the Reconstruction, who were present approved as well the suggestion as the formula adopted to convey the underlying thought, magnificent in its direct simplicity. What German would again hurl the brand to destroy the Temple of Learning upon whose front that legend should appear? To omit the inscription would be to justify the crime, to invite its repetition.

It was written upon both sides of a fragment of paper — (see photograph).

Inspired by his artistic spirit, Mr. Warren used the text as the theme for a decorative motif. He might have acted in a provocative and aggressive manner and placed the inscription upon a tablet or a frieze in staring, visible, uncompromising letters. Instead he made a diadem, interweaving and uniting through the medium of an encircling balustrade, the symbolic motif which crowned his work. Monseigneur

Ladeuze, the Rector, knew of the inscription and knew where and how it was to be placed. On the 7th of April, 1921, Monseigneur Ladeuze with such full knowledge wrote Mr. Warren a letter, which appeared at the time in the American Press; in which he said: "Our souls are full of confidence, for you have made us comprehend more than ever before America's feeling in the work so brilliantly commenced. Now that you know and love our people, we know that you will not abandon us in our distress. May the good Providence aid you and ourselves to the very end." Wrought up, like everyone, by what he called the cowardly destruction of the library, Mgr. Ladeuze as a token, to perpetuate a solemn declaration of protest, in connection with the gift of books which preceded the erection of the new building, caused to be struck a commemorative medal with the inscription: "HUMANITAS AMERICAE ANNO MCMXXI RESTITUIT BIBLIOTECAM UNIVERSITATIS ANNO MCMXIV FERITATE GERMANICI EXERCITUS COMBUSTAM" — American generosity raised in 1921 the Louvain University library which was burned through the barbarity of the German army in 1914.

But, in June, 1928, Mgr. Ladeuze caused the architect's proxy to be arrested on the works by the police and threatened the architect that he would forbid him entrance to his work if he carried out Cardinal Mercier's instructions. Cardinal Mercier, mourned by Belgium and by all true patriots in the world, died on the 23rd of January, 1926. Like ravens winging toward their prey a few evil spirits started to destroy the lesson embodied in the project — to do away with the supreme thought of the great prelate.

Not until 1927 were the first tentative efforts made to persuade Mr. Warren to be false to his trust and to do away with the inscription. In letters which he wrote to him on July 9 and August 11, 1927, Mgr. Ladeuze suggested the following substitute wording: "Hostili incendio eversa Americae benevolentia Consurgo" — "Destroyed by hostile flames, I rise again through American benevolence." Why

so many complications, so many intrigues to suppress the inscription inspired by Cardinal Mercier and propose another formula with practically the same meaning?

Mr. Warren had no right to either suppress or to alter the original words. They were not of his making. He remained therefore firm in his duty, performing his task as an artist, respecting the moral pledge he had given the Cardinal, on whose behalf alone he had agreed to undertake the task. In the meantime two of Mr. Warren's helpful collaborators died — Mr. Imbart de la Tour, member of the Institut de France and head of the International Commission for the Restoration, and Mgr. Deploige. Continual pressure as well as intrigues were resorted to and cablegrams were sent seeking to induce Mr. Warren to change his attitude. The public at large knew nothing of the campaign against the inscription. I myself, although a Belgian citizen, first heard about this controversy during my visit to the United States in 1927 and it was only in November, 1927, that I had my first interview with an important American personality who advocated the idea of suppressing the inscription and disclosed to me with enthusiasm his absolute confidence in the result of the issue. He told me of having had interviews with Stresemann, Briand, etc.

On first learning of the matter I got in touch with Mr. Warren to learn his attitude. He explained to me the exact conditions, stating that when he had accepted the duty of building the new library he had in mind not alone a material, but a spiritual reconstruction. He stated that he could neither alter nor suppress anything; that he had seen Cardinal Mercier two months before his death and that the Cardinal expressed no desire for any change. "No one," said Mr. Warren, "with whom I have dealt either verbally or in writing asked before the Cardinal's demise for the suppression of the inscription." The enemies of the inscription claim that if the great prelate still lived, he would change his mind. Is it probable that he would have changed in a few months a frame of mind which he had maintained seven

years? Is it not an attempted betrayal of the dead to use such an hypothesis as an argument? I quote the words used in a recent letter by Miss Susan Minns of Massachusetts, a most generous contributor to the reconstruction: "The record of Cardinal Mercier is closed for all time, no one has the right to attribute to him other or different ideas from those he expressed in life."

Mgr. Ladeuze wrote to Mr. Warren on the 7th of December, 1927, a letter whose main passages are reproduced:

"I certainly admire in you that worshipping of truth and justice which inspires your attitude and reflects the loftiness of your character. However, I would like to be allowed to point out to you that no virtue is perfect that does not harmonize with the other virtues bearing on the same subject.

"The interests of the Louvain University require that, as soon as our dignity permits, we renew scientific relations with the German universities. Now it is obvious that the Germans will always refuse to renew such relations if they cannot come to Louvain without having to read on the main building of the university a proclamation calling them barbarians. . . .

"The good will shown by the Germans toward the restoration of our library opens also the way to Christian charity. We are true to the Roman Catholic Church when we hope to see some day a revival of peace among men of good will. I venture to say that under the present circumstances Cardinal Mercier would have himself objected to an inscription which he approved at the close of the war but whose strength has been changed by the passing of ten years. . . .

"Moreover I notice that all parties concerned are opposed to the inscription. You have remained so far its defender. I trust that the considerations I have just set forth will make you change your mind.

"In case you do not somebody will have to settle the question.

"Since all the moneys required for the completion of the work were turned over to the university and it is therefore the university which directs the work, it seems to me that in case of a controversy it is up to the university to decide. Now the university is opposed to the placement of the inscription in question and also to that of any other inscription. . . ."

One must admit that the Rector has expressed himself in an imperative and discourteous manner toward the donators and the eminent architect and has also set forth a very unfortunate argument in saying in substance that "It is he who is the proprietor who decides." It looks as though he could have almost said it is not thanks to the Americans but to the goodwill of the Germans that we owe the new library. His attitude is in *direct opposition to his propositions of July 9 and August 11, 1927.*

Before engaging in polemics in Belgium I sounded several personalities close to university authority and all suggested that I drop the matter in view of the fact that the decision of the Rector was immovable. I exhausted all means of action before appealing to the Press and to public opinion. Mgr. Ladeuze's letter of December 7 was published by the Belgian Press and it made a painful impression. The Federation of Patriotic Associations of Belgium, of Veteran Societies and of war mothers, widows and orphans of the war united in writing a dignified request entreating Mgr. Ladeuze to maintain the Cardinal's inscription in the name of historical truth and in his memory. The honor was bestowed upon me of taking this message to the Rector.

It read as follows:

BRUSSELS, May 18, 1928.

Monseigneur,

We hear on all sides that you have welcomed Mr. Whitney Warren most cordially. It seems that the differences between him and you have been grossly exaggerated. It appears that Mr. Warren and the Belgian patriots have little doubt that the already famous formula "FURORE TEUTONICO DIRUTA, DONO AMERICANO RESTITUTA" will appear on the façade of the library.

Indeed, Monseigneur, you must at heart like that formula, so accurate it is in its two divisions, so strikingly true and condensed, yet so discreet, and we all know that it will adorn a balustrade with its interlacing designs which will prevent the inscription from standing out too glaringly.

Have you not been, Monseigneur, somewhat associated with the creation of this formula retained by His Eminence the Cardinal Mercier and which perhaps sprung up one day that you were talking to him about the rebuilding of the library?

Your modesty which we know to be extreme, associated with a very strong inclination to be charitable, has perhaps led you to prefer another formula in which you did not participate? Would you thus agree to reject the text wanted by Monseigneur Mercier and to which immediately rallied the veterans and the patriots just because it expresses in a few words the historical truth?

During a number of months you have, Monseigneur, heard the voice of pacifists who claim to be more attached to peace than to anything else. This voice immoderately amplified as are the material means of its owners had perhaps finally succeeded in deafening you to the discreet but firm protest of the Belgians who are fond of remembering the great glory conquered in four years of war. . . .

The passage of Mr. W. Warren at Louvain carrying the aspirations and the firm will of the veterans and patriots sufficed to make you feel that the solution of the difference was not so very difficult.

On the other hand you saw Mr. W. Warren and listened to him — a kind heart, a bright mind, a beautiful character before which we all bow — the rebuilder of the Louvain library who so faithfully interpreted the immutable will of his Eminence Cardinal Mercier, the spiritual guide of Belgium during the war.

Mr. W. Warren no doubt has relied on the power of our societies and also on the sense of justice residing in all Belgian hearts. Even if our compatriots' judgment does not always permit them to see the reasons of their preference, the sense of justice inborn in them serves to dispel all ambiguities. Let us never forget, Monseigneur, that the outcry of Belgium at the declaration of war was a protest against a violation of justice.

Between the deep voices of justice, truth and national feeling and the bleating of the doubtful pacifists, you have, Monseigneur, no hesitation and you will hardly have to seek a means of preventing the day of July 4th from lacking too much charity.

It would be an easy matter if a new "MANIFEST OF THE INTELLECTUALS" backing the actions of a penitent people brought to the Belgians an expression of sincere repentance together with the firm resolution of not erring again.

While awaiting such satisfaction you may rely upon us, Mon-

seigneur, not to rob the ceremony of the coming July 4th of its dignity and to see to it that justice be done.

We are not men blinded by hatred or by an inclination to violence; Monseigneur Tacci Porcelli, the Pope's nuncio, spoke in his report on the beginning of the German invasion in Belgium of the rather gentle disposition of the Belgians.

However, we, the old Belgian veterans and patriots, are mourning forty-five thousand dead and the remembrance of this hecatomb haunts us and brings sadness into our lives.

The entire Belgian population recalls the sacrifices of the soldiers who fell to regain Belgium's independence and those of the exiled left to die in prison for refusing to work for the enemy.

These painful sacrifices have created for us duties demanding that we prevent the return of war, requiring that we cultivate for our dead reverence which makes our experience a living thing; they oblige us to guard against neighbours whose uncertain attitude makes us fear that the era of charity may begin with the day of dupes.

We must remember that we must defend ourselves and this is why we practice justice with prudence.

The inscription "FURORE TEUTONICO DIRUTA, DONO AMERICANO RESTITUTA" desired by Monseigneur Mercier is inspired by these same preoccupations which are those of the men who saw and understood what happened on Belgian soil.

We are in accord with justice and prudence, we are in accord with His Eminence Cardinal Mercier and no doubt we have also, Monseigneur, your intimate approval.

It may be that the expression of our discontent has wounded you; allow us to state that there will be more joy in our hearts when our accord is final than there was discontent at the time of our trifling difference.

We would be greatly honored and happy to receive the assurance of your agreement. In this hope we remain,

Yours very respectfully,

to Monseigneur Ladeuze,
Recteur Magnifique of the
University at Louvain.

The associations whose names follow signed this letter in approval and asked Mr. Pierre de Soete to hand it to Monseigneur Ladeuze:

Association Nationale des Combattants du Front
Amities Françaises de Bruzelles

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Comité Central des Invalides
Union des Mères et Veuves de Guerre de Belgique
Fraternelle des Vieux Volontaires de la Grande Guerre
Groupement des Combattants 1911–1918 de St. Josse ten Noode
Action Nationale
Section de l'Amicale des Officiers de la Campagne 1914–1918
F.N.C. Section de Schaerbect
Legion Nationale Belge, Section de Louvain.

By a telegram of June 14, 1928, Mgr. Ladeuze advised me that he did not wish to receive me. To fulfill the mission entrusted to me I was obliged to go to the private residence of the Rector accompanied by witnesses and deliver the message into the hands of one of his assistants. The societies which had signed this request as well as the public severely judged this lack of courtesy coupled with a dictatory attitude. Mgr. Ladeuze who in his letter of December 3, 1927, said he could not accept the inscription because he did not wish to hinder the renewal of intellectual relations with our former enemies, had realized the mistake made and its bad impression on public opinion.

And I refer to an excerpt from a speech delivered by Monseigneur J. F. Stillemans at the New York University at the time the banner for the Louvain University was presented. I see that the eminent prelate quoted as follows the words pronounced by Monseigneur Ladeuze: "Monseigneur Ladeuze's behavior during the German occupation was not less heroic. When the German emissaries offered gold and books trying to make up for their infamous action he answered them: 'Let your presents perish with you. We do not wish to help you hide your shame'."

Is not this language of the rector incompatible with, and in direct contradiction to his present attitude?

As an excuse they say that what was possible in 1921 and until 1927 is no longer so in 1928. Why then did he banish and insult the German emissaries?

Any man should maintain his own responsibility and one's word must be lived up to as much as one's signature. It is what Mr. Warren has been doing.

Mgr. Ladeuze changed his policy and to justify his conduct, he claimed that the wording of the inscription was in bad Latin, barbarous and unworthy of appearing on the new library. He said further that that building was not the same as the one burned since it did not stand on the same ground! Specious reasoning. He knew all this in 1921 and the Latin used must have been good down to 1927 since neither Mgr. Ladeuze nor the Latinists of the university made any objection on that score. The inscription was published throughout the world and no one disputed it. But in 1928 they would have us believe that neither Cardinal Mercier, nor Mgr. Deploige nor Canon Thiéry, knew their Latin. Why did they wait until after Cardinal Mercier's death to raise such arguments?

The inscription was reviewed by the most eminent professors of the University of Brussels and I give below its primary derivation: "Furore Teutonico" was borrowed from Book IV p. 256 of the Pharsalus of Lucian and is therefore beyond criticism. But I do not wish here to merely analyse good or bad Latin. Boisac, the eminent history professor of the Brussels university has found in his research work in the records that the expression "Furore Teutonico" is a term which the Germans themselves employed with enthusiasm. Even the former Kaiser used it when urging his troops to charge. The inscription then does not convey such a sense of barbarism as would offend a German, as the rector said in his letter. Why then are our pacifists so wounded? Mr. Warren never tried to analyse this text, as he had confidence in the person who expressed to him the desire to have it placed on the monument; he wanted no complications, wishing only to complete his work as he had designed it, as he had started it and as it was presented in the campaign for contributions. He had the text in his possession before drawing a single line of his plans and it

was shown on the first as on the last designs. The American Press and the Press of the World published it at the time. "Why oblige me," he said to me, "to abandon what I have solemnly promised to the Cardinal, for the sake of pleasing a small number of people? I have not to follow the trend of politics. As an artist I have been called upon to write in stone a page of the history of the war of 1914 and it cannot be changed in 1928". . . .

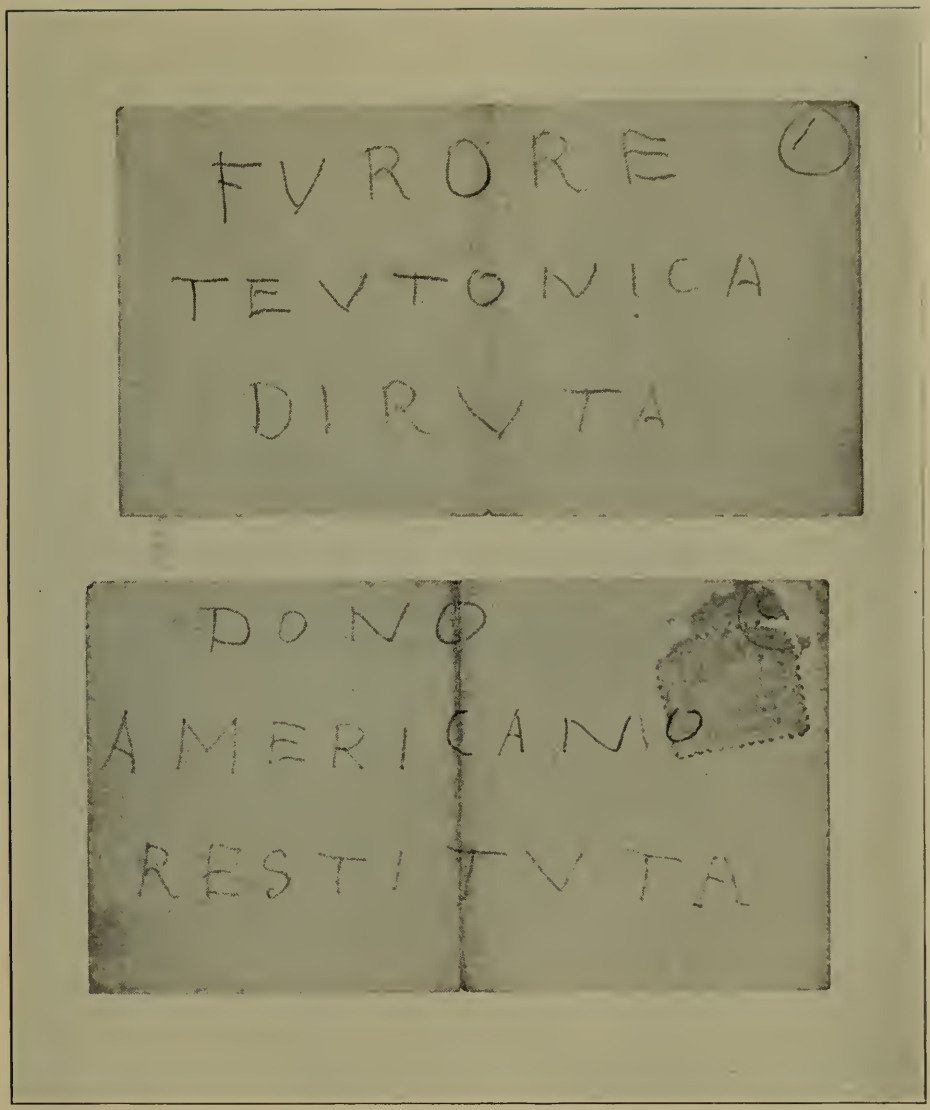
If any pretend that hatred would be perpetuated by inscriptions on monuments they may rest assured that those who defend the inscription are as much bent as they on making every effort toward the realization of an understanding among peoples and toward universal peace. The idea is by no means to harbor hatred but to provide a safeguard and give the world, so to speak, a forewarning that future generations may realize that the destruction of a temple of science is a crime against humanity. They say they want to do away with the inscription to avoid vexing the Germans, but nobody ever objected when on the Heidelberg fortress, a strategic position, the Germans placed a plaque stating that the fortress had been destroyed by the French. That plaque is preserved and kept as a relic. Why not this inscription?

On our old monuments in Belgium, on the Grand Place of Brussels among others, are inscriptions and chronograms mentioning war deeds of the time of the struggle against the Spaniards and the French, but this has never prevented us from entertaining with Spain and France the warmest relations. The Rector of the Louvain University wants to suppress the inscription to keep from the Germans the painful impression of crime and the idea, so they claim, is to facilitate intellectual relations with them. Why then such antithesis? In May, 1928, Mgr. Ladeuze asked the architect to have engraved a dozen chronograms as follows:

SIGERUM	CONCURSU
PHOENIX	RECRESCIT

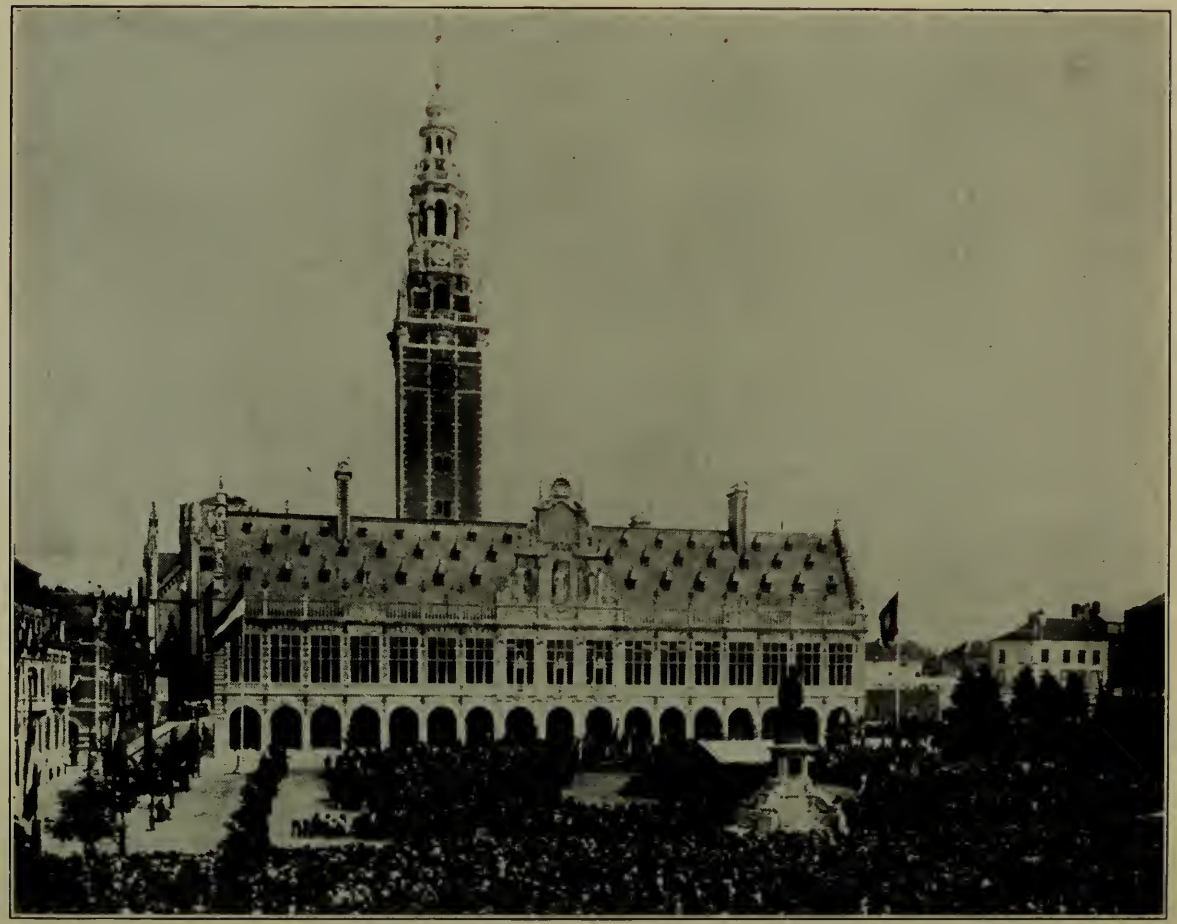
Translation:

PHOENIX: it rises again thanks to a happy meeting of the stars.



The original inscription composed by order of Cardinal Mercier, handed by him to Mr. Warren with the request that it should be placed prominently on the façade of the new Library as a safeguard against future happenings of the same sort.

The main façade of the Library on the day of inauguration, showing balustrade, without inscription, prepared clandestinely and put in place against the protest of the artist, Whitney Warren.



The main façade shortly after the inauguration, showing the clandestinely substituted balustrade demolished.

Scene after destruction of first clandestinely prepared balustrade

Showing the pieces of the second clandestinely prepared balustrade demolished.

Lateral façade showing Cardinal Mercier's bust in place over the pulpit dedicated to him.

Detail of main façade showing Virgin and Child, supported by St. George and St. Michael, destroying the evil spirits, also busts of the King, Queen and Crown Prince of Belgium.

The Beginning of Main Stairway.

Belgian Lion and staircase leading to Tower.

The Salle-des-pas perdus or meeting place of students showing on columns inscriptions to the American Schools and Colleges who subscribed—these inscriptions number over 300.

The allusion being to the star spangled banner of the United States.

On the right hand side of the main front:

Juris. Servatoribus. Alberto. Mercier. Belgii. Nationi. status. Confederati.

which means in English:

To the saviors of right, Albert and Mercier of Belgium, the United States erected this building.

On the left side of the same front:

Sanguinis Americi, Belgii, Liberationis, gratia, profusi, Recordationi perenni.

Translation:

To the eternal memory of the American blood shed for the salvation of Belgium.

Rear façade, left side:

Face consumpta sax universo accendaris ipsa.

Translation:

Annihilated by force, it becomes a beacon for the entire universe.

On the side toward the square:

In funerea nocte amica colluxerunt sidera.

Translation:

In a dark night shone friendly stars.

On the opposite side:

Succenderunt gentibus lumina in secula.

In English:

They have lighted for humanity an eternal light.

These inscriptions recall in different ways the burning of the library by the Germans and the reconstruction by the Americans.

All this is what was to be and is carved on the building. Why engage in so many polemics and annoy the architect since in his chronograms Mgr. Ladeuze conveyed the same thought as the inscription wished by Cardinal Mercier? Any unbiassed mind would look upon such an attitude as paradoxical. Besides the question might be asked why the Louvain University has admission blanks which all Germans must sign before entering the university, thereby acknowledging that the library was burned by Germany and that the Germans violated the neutrality of Belgium. This fact was publicly affirmed by the University and published in the Belgian Press over the signature of Prof. Vanderesson, the secretary of the University.

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That seems more likely to perpetrate hatred. It looks as if the University wishes to do administratively that which it wants to prevent Mr. Warren from doing artistically. The reader is at liberty to draw his own conclusions. It seems to me neither a question of hatred nor of Locarno spirit, but a desire to falsify history by removing the proof that Louvain was wantonly burned by the Germans. The "Koelnische Zeitung" of July 1, 1927, draws out of the controversy the following conclusion: "*If the inscription is not placed on the new building it is because it is recognized that we never burned it.*"

The Germans' active policy consists in trying to make people believe they are innocent, of denying and denying again in order to convince Americans that their intervention was secured on a false plea made by Belgium and its Cardinal. So far, in spite of all that has been written and proven, Germany has not made the slightest move toward repentance for her actions at Louvain. By forceful propaganda they would distort all the accounts, unwilling to assume before the world the tremendous responsibility for their acts of destruction against monuments that are inviolable.

To this challenge Belgium replies that being unwilling to compromise her dignity, her honor and her history, she cannot abdicate. Belgian public opinion and the majority of the newspapers have united to approve the attitude of the eminent architect in a golden memorial book under the honorary patronage of Belgium's most prominent personalities such as State ministers, Generals, Senators, Mayors, leading editors and publishers and the great war figure, Mr. Adolphe Max, regardless of their political opinions or religious beliefs. Thousands of signatures appended to the memorial bear witness to our gratitude to the artist.

LIST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HONORARY COMMITTEE

Lieutenant General Berheim, Brussels,
Blaton, Robert, Manufacturer, Brussels,
Mrs. Bruneel, President of the "Union des Mères et Veuves de Guerre,"

Brunfaut, Jules, architect, former president of the Academie Royale Belge, member of the Institut de France,
Cailleau, Maurice, President of the A.N.C.F. of Brussels,
F. Calloud, lawyer, Louvain,
Canon-Legrand, engineer, Mons,
Cattier, G., lawyer, Brussels,
Baron Courtens, artist, Brussels,
de la Hault, Auguste, banker, Brussels,
Deneef, Louvain,
Dens, Leon, senator, Brussels,
D'Hondt, Gustave, President "Association des Boulangers de Belgique," Brussels,
Baron de Witte, Lieutenant General, Brussels,
Dumont Wilden, literary man, Brussels,
Gernaert, Jules, President, "Anciens Volontaires de Guerre ages de plus de 50 ans le 1er. aout 1914,"
Huysmans, Edouard, lawyer, Brussels,
Max, Adolphe, Ministre d'Etat, Mayor of Brussels,
Meurice, Mayor of Visé,
Neujean, Mayor of Liege, former minister,
Peltzer de Clermont, former senator, Spa,
Rossel, Victor, Director of the newspaper "*Soir*", Brussels,
Sasserath, Mayor of Dinant,
Springael, M., General Secretary of the "A.N.C.F.", Brussels,
Van Ermen, notary, ancien secretaire communal, Louvain,
Deveze, Albert, Deputy, lawyer, Brussels,
Van de Wiele, Gaston, Lawyer, President of the "F.N.C.", Brussels,
Colins, former mayor of Louvain,
de Crawhez, Mayor of Spa,
Jaspar, Ernest, architect, Brussels,
de Ridder, G., manufacturer, Louvain,
Pierson, Antoine, Brussels,
Roman, notary, Louvain,
Rooman, Director of the Authors' Society, Brussels,
Van Nech, architect, Brussels,

Masson, Fulgence, Ministre d'Etat, Brussels,
Magnette, Vice-President of the Senate, Brussels,
Colleaux, Ministre d'Etat, Brussels,
Bernier F., Echevin de St. Gilles.

He has received countless letters begging him not to change his mind and congratulating him on his attitude in rejecting all attempts to induce him to disregard Cardinal Mercier's instructions.

On June 25th, 1928, Mr. Warren sent Monseigneur Ladeuze an open letter which appeared in the Press.

Brussels, June 25, 1928.

Monseigneur,

After the painful incidents of last Saturday I cannot refrain from transmitting to you an expression of my feelings and recording a public protest against the unworthy treatment accorded to me.

My difference with you is purely private and civil.

You invoke rights as proprietor and I claim my rights as an architect, author and artist.

The brutal action of the police, made at your instance, in arresting my attorney, Mr. de Soete, and in forbidding me entrance to my work-yards, shall not prevent me from superintending the completion of my work.

As an American citizen, from respect for the Belgian authorities, I submitted, but my intention is to have my rights in regard to my artistic property, respected. It is not for me to discuss the propriety of the act of the police but some jurists consider it as arbitrary.

I certainly do not wish to pursue the controversy on the basis of violence upon which you have placed it, as I fear that thereby your dignity surely would suffer more than mine. It appears that you have uttered both insults and threats against me. I would forget that and I refrain from answering you, to avoid a spectacle which would easily become degrading and scandalous.

Against the physical power of the police I can do nothing. Towards your anger I observe silence wishing to keep my temper from deference for your person and your standing.

I desire to state, however, that I do not understand the position you take.

When His Eminence Cardinal Mercier selected the words "furore teutonico diruta, dono americano restituta" to be wrought in stone upon the façade of the new Library, he was interpreting the conscience of the civilized peoples of the world.

In putting forth all my artistic skill to design a balustrade

containing this inscription interwoven therein as shown on my plans which were approved by him and in carrying it into execution, I was actuated as well by a regard for historical truth as by respect for his memory.

The deep calculations of your diplomacy are bent upon wiping out the traces of the invasion of 1914 and of the intentional burning of the library of Louvain University by German soldiers on August 25, 1914.

You wrote me on December 3, 1927, trying to bring me around to your views and you said in particular: "To the cult of truth one must add the exercise of prudence and charity. The interests of Louvain University require that, as soon as our dignity permits, we renew scientific relations with the German universities. Now it is obvious that the Germans will always refuse to renew such relations if they cannot come to Louvain without having to read on the main building of the university a proclamation calling them barbarians."

Such arguments fail to convince me. My opinion is that German intellectuals would do better to openly disavow the atrocities committed by the Kaiser's armies rather than demand their effacement from the records. And the cause of peace in the future would be better served by a respect for historical truth than by its disregard and oblivion. If a few years are sufficient to wipe out the recollection of the violation of right and to insure the culprits' immunity one may wonder where a defense against the recurrence of such outrages resides.

So far as I am concerned I cannot forsake a sacred cause nor betray the spiritual interests which have been entrusted to me.

Yours respectfully,

WHITNEY WARREN

This is the spiritual reason why "Furore Teutonico Diruta: Dono Americano Restituta" must appear on the Louvain library. All the arguments put forth to the contrary have been disproved by indisputable reasons and proofs. The university authorities have constantly modified their attitude while Mr. Warren's has never changed. The inscription cannot be sacrificed.

II

PROTECTION OF ARTISTIC WORK

As regards the protection of artistic work the Conventions of Berne (Sept. 9, 1886), Berlin (Nov. 23, 1908) and Rome

(June 2, 1928) in which each country was officially represented by delegates and ministers plenipotentiary, established definite and express rules to safeguard artistic rights. The very explicit article, VI (bis), of those conventions reads: "Irrespective of the author's patrimonial rights and even after such rights have expired, the author still retains the right to claim the paternity of his work and to stop *alterations, mutilations or other modifications of the same which might injure his honor or his reputation.*"

This plain and definite clause covers, adequately and expressly, an artist's rights, his prerogative and patrimony. An architect certainly has as much right as a composer, or other artist to prevent an alteration or mutilation of his work. Following the same line of thought it can be said that when an editor has acquired the right of reproducing a manuscript he is not thereby authorized to mar the author's idea. Why should there be among the nine muses a disinherited one and why should that one be Architecture? Mr. Warren had submitted his plans in full detail including the inscription to Cardinal Mercier who approved them in his letter of April 6, 1921.

L'Hermite en Brabant, le 6 Avril 1921.

Dear Mr. Warren,

The plans and drawings which you were kind enough to bring with you to show me are perfect. It is a joy as well as a duty to give you my congratulations.

Thanks to your tenacity, the new library for the University of Louvain will rise on the finest site that the city could offer us. Your project has a character eminently practical. All the different departments are provided for and you have solved the various problems which arise therefrom, with an elegant simplicity.

With a sense of delicacy which touched me deeply, you laid to one side your American ideals to follow our national ambitions by designing a building recalling the purest traditions of our Flemish and Brabançonne art. For an instant I even thought you had intended to reproduce the Palais de Justice at Malines, so striking was the likeness between a part of your façade and that monument.

Even still finer and more touching than the gift of the Library

to Louvain is the gesture of the nation which claimed the privilege of rebuilding it.

That thereby it might appear that the American people intend to maintain before the world disinterestedness and the cult of justice, America entered the great war without having any interest, personal or national, but solely because she wanted right to prevail and injustice punished. Her first mission once achieved she does not wish that the results of the crime committed by the German incendiaries should be borne any longer by those who were their first victims, and to the obstinacy of Germany in dishonor, she proudly opposes her will by re-establishing as soon as possible, the reign of justice and the triumph of civilization in a great scientific Institution.

The United States still grows in the eyes of the world and shall be the greater in history for having confided to the Committee headed by President Butler, the task of raising the ruins of the University of Louvain, and when, in the near future, your compatriots come to visit our ancient Brabançonne city, to admire the monument, they will receive the impression, I do not doubt, as they look upon it, that their generosity has morally enriched them to a greater extent, aye even more, than it has helped us.

Please accept all my wishes for the success of the realization of your noble task and rest assured of my devotion to the American people, the Committee and yourself.

D. J. Cardinal Mercier

The money subscribed was transferred to the University which, upon Mr. Warren's suggestion, contracted with the Foundation Company to do the physical work of construction. The Foundation Company pledged itself by contract to execute the work in accordance with the architect's plans of which the inscribed balustrade was a part. There exists in the contract no clause authorizing the University to change in the least the artistic production of the architect which was accepted as a whole. In his capacity as Rector of the University, Mgr. Ladeuze was aware of the provisions of the contract and by acquiescing in the commencing of the construction work under it, without a single reservation clause, he accepted them. Nevertheless, without consulting the architect, he ordered the Foundation Company to make clandestinely a balustrade according to his own idea. No one

knew of this secret order. When Mr. Warren visited Belgium in May, 1928 he noticed with surprise that his plan of the balustrade was not being carried out. He immediately gave orders it should be executed. Mgr. Ladeuze temporized and pretended to acquiesce, but meanwhile took secret measures to prevent the erection of the inscribed balustrade. It was on June 21st, 1928 that I learned of the proposed substitution. I advised Mr. Warren, who was then in Paris, and he said: "*I cannot believe it; I do not agree with the Rector on the matter of the principle involved, but I do not think that he is capable of sabotaging my work.*" On my suggestion, Mr. Warren came to Louvain on June 22nd and he then realized the vexatious truth. It was probably at that time that we all experienced the most painful moments of the Louvain affair. In a voice oppressed by emotion Mr. Warren said to me: "*Had I not seen it I would never have believed it; I do not deserve such an affront.*" A formal protest was made against this act of sabotage and Mr. Warren as the architect and master of the work caused an injunction to be served on the Foundation Company forbidding the placement of the substitute balustrade. On the same day Mr. Warren took possession of the completed, correct balustrade and the next day, June 23rd, had it taken to the work-yard. With his usual correctness, Mr. Warren advised Rector Ladeuze, by a letter delivered by a ministerial official, that he would assume the direction of the work in the morning and have the correct balustrade placed on the building. It was an act of courtesy much appreciated by the public at large. I learned of the vexatious measures that the Rector purposed taking to keep the architect from completing his task. To prevent this American citizen from being personally humiliated I was legally appointed as his personal representative. From that time on the direction of the work was entrusted to me so that I could uphold the artist's rights. I was arrested illegally and brutally by the police force upon the order of the University Rector. The arrest was wholly arbitrary and in violation of Belgian law. The next day under police guard,

the Rector had his own balustrade put in place, while the right one was roughly thrown into the cellar of the Louvain City Hall. The people indignantly broke the police cordon and destroyed the balustrade erected by the Rector.

Some city notables were arrested. With inconceivable stubbornness Mgr. Ladeuze had another false balustrade made which, in its turn, was put in place upon the building under the guard of an armed force. This constituted a real challenge to public opinion and to the Conventions protecting artistic rights.

The library was guarded night and day until the dedication, which took place on July 4th, 1928, with the false balustrade upon the building. The prosecuting attorney at Louvain had the city placed under martial law and the Rector solicited the protection of an armed force. The martyr city, which had suffered under the enemy's oppression, had hoped to make the dedication a national holiday to express gratitude to those who had contributed to the monument and the ceremony was also to be the crowning of Mr. Warren's artistic career. It was, instead, almost a day of mourning, with the attendance of just a few officials whose commissions or positions prevented them from absenting themselves.

The Académie de France (Fine Arts), which was responsible for the choice of Mr. Warren as architect, and which had forwarded to the Louvain Library over forty thousand books and manuscripts, decided at its sitting on June 30th, 1928 to refrain from any official participation in the dedication as a protest against the measures taken by the Rector. The crowd was dismayed, only a few houses were adorned with Belgian flags, while others had the flag at half-mast as a sign of protest. An aeroplane, in violation of orders, flew overhead during the ceremony and dropped tracts bearing the true inscription.

Several American delegates who had come officially to Belgium refused to attend after hearing of the Rector's attitude.

At the ceremony itself, it was only because of the presence of their Royal Highnesses, Prince Leopold and Princess Astrid that no untoward incident occurred. The baptizer, the creator, the soul of this wonderful monument, the eminent architect, was not present; he sent apologies to Prince Leopold in a letter, a copy of which is given below:

To His Royal Highness,
The Prince Leopold of Belgium,
Palais de Bruxelles.

Monseigneur,

For seven years I entertained the hope of having the great joy of attending the dedication ceremony of the Louvain Library to which I believe your Royal Highness has accepted an invitation to be present.

It would have been the greatest joy of my life to be able to turn over to the Recteur the keys to the new edifice in the presence of your Royal Highness.

It would have been also the great pride of my career to have carried out to the end the full thought of the illustrious Cardinal Mercier.

Fate, however, has decided otherwise. My work has been mutilated and the monument which will be presented to your Royal Highness no longer represents materially and spiritually what it should.

I therefore beg your Royal Highness to pardon me for not attending the dedication ceremony and remain,

Very respectfully yours,

WHITNEY WARREN

July 3rd, 1928.

Both Mr. Warren and I used all possible means to avoid the occurrence of any manifestation which might have deprived the ceremony of its dignity.

Mr. Warren did not wish to be identified with any hostile or bellicose manifestations; he remained entirely in the position of asserting his claims to his artistic and spiritual rights. Having exhausted, without avail, all correct means to be al-

lowed to complete his work, he very much regretted he had no other course to pursue but that of appealing to the Belgian courts to secure the protection of his rights. He therefore requested his attorney to serve on the University of Louvain an official summons, to wit:

Upon the request of Mr. Whitney Warren, architect, of 16 East 47th Street, New York, U. S. A., establishing his domicile at my address and for whose account is appointed to act Mr. Osselaer, attorney at the Court of Louvain,

I, the undersigned sheriff, have summoned the Catholic University of Louvain, a body corporate, located at Louvain, represented by its board of directors, to appear as provided by law before the Louvain civil court of first instance, to;

Whereas the plaintiff is the author of the plans of the new library of the Louvain University erected on Place du Peuple through the help of American committees and by his intervention;

Whereas the said plans were approved at their inception by the defendant and, more particularly, by the late Cardinal Mercier as well as by all parties interested in the reconstruction of the building burned down by German troops on August 25th, 1914;

Whereas it has always been understood that the plaintiff was the executive in charge of the work in keeping with the plans provided and without any restriction or reserve;

Whereas at the time the construction work was to be terminated the defendant, through the agency of Monseigneur Ladeuze, Recteur Magnifique of Louvain University, especially delegated for the purpose, prevented the placement of the balustrade which was to be built on the front of the edifice and had placed in its stead a balustrade of an entirely different design which had been secretly prepared;

Whereas the balustrade shown on the plaintiff's plans and which he had ordered made and which was appointed to put in place formed an integral part of the edifice and constituted a complement to the whole;

Whereas the intended balustrade, being richly sculptured and forming by means of interlocked letters the inscription "FURORE TEUTONICO DIRUTA, DONO AMERICANO RESTITUTA," furnished to the edifice not only its spiritual sense but constituted an esthetic decoration harmonizing with the ensemble of the main façade;

Whereas by arbitrarily modifying against the known purpose of plaintiff the artistic monument whose design is his production, the defendant has injured the "author rights" of plaintiff;

Whereas such action is a flagrant violation not only of the verbal agreements between the parties but of the right which the architect like the author of any artistic, or literary or musical production has in his production by virtue of the principles governing industrial property and in keeping with the law of March 22, 1886 covering authors' rights and further of the international conventions in the premises;

Whereas a work of art constitutes an indivisible whole and the legal protection of the author's rights would be destroyed were it permissible to alter its nature by mutilations, deformations or suppression;

Whereas by mutilating the plaintiff's work of art the defendant has caused plaintiff a considerable material and moral injury for which reparation should be made;

Take Notice: that by modifying against plaintiff's wishes the construction of the new Louvain Library, whose plans were plaintiff's idea, defendant has violated the verbal agreements between the parties injured, the "author rights" of plaintiff and committed a fault causing the latter an injury for which he has the right to claim damages,

Consequently defendant is ordered by the court to remove the balustrade now placed on the main façade of the building, within 48 hours from the time of notification of judgment, under a penalty for default of five thousand francs per day of delay and

Take Notice: plaintiff is authorized to put in place, at the expense of defendant, the balustrade as it was provided by

plaintiff's plans, the expenditure to be recoverable against a simple receipt from the contractors;

Defendant is notified that it will be sentenced to pay plaintiff the amount of two million francs as reparation for the moral and material injury caused plaintiff by defendant;

Defendant is further notified that it will be sentenced to pay the lawful interest together with the costs of this action.

On July 17, Mgr. Ladeuze's balustrade was destroyed for the second time. It was Mr. Felix Morren, head workman belonging to the personnel of the construction, a victim of the Germans during Louvain's occupation, who took upon himself to overthrow the Rector's unlawful act. By an act which cannot be approved juridically, but was applauded by all patriots, he summoned public opinion to respect Cardinal Mercier's wishes. His act of patriotism caused him to be arrested and imprisoned.

The accompanying photographs show the Library with the balustrade lacking along the entire front of the building; and the fragments of stone lying on the sidewalk.

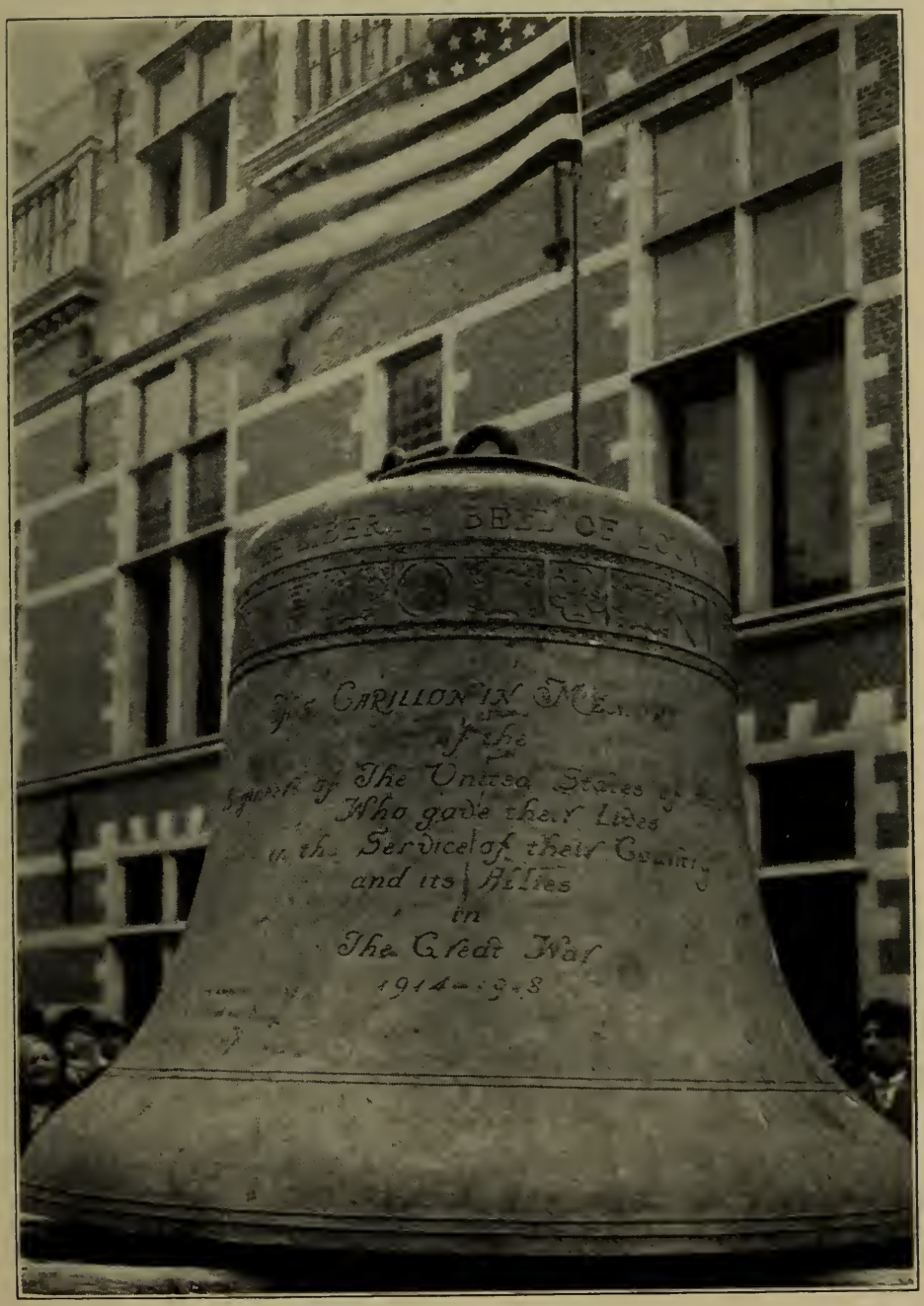
Since then certain conciliatory negotiations have been instituted. The University realized that they had no right to handle in such a way the eminent architect who, though he had not personally raised all the fund for the construction of the building, had by his untiring work and activities secured many donators thereto. Through the intervention of several eminent personalities the Rector has sought a compromise, realizing that he had drifted too far from the right course. Had he not, with unfortunate stubbornness, raised the question of the inscription, not one tenth of the present emphasis would have been given to it in the public mind. Mr. Warren stands within his rights; the University is in its own wrong; it has shockingly abused its power.

In spite of the unfortunate attitude of the Rector, taking side with neither party, but recognizing Mr. Warren's merits and wishing to acknowledge his great talent, the

King has conferred upon him the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Belgian Crown, one of the highest distinctions in Belgium. Mr. Warren has also been elected unanimously a member of the Academie Royale of Belgium thus testifying to the esteem of his Belgian confrères. Since His Majesty, the King, and the Academie Royale have recognized Mr. Warren's talent and the artistic services he has rendered, why should not the University of Louvain, as a token of its gratitude, also allow the eminent architect to complete his work? At a meeting in New York of the Beaux Arts Institute of Design, artists, architects, sculptors, painters, etc., covered with over one hundred signatures a manifesto upholding Mr. Warren's attitude and asking that the inscription be maintained. The same wish has been expressed by a great number of the donors whose intention is not to defend their *material*, but their *spiritual* contribution and they have sent numerous letters to Mr. Warren stating that he has no right to agree to a change in the design.

I have deemed it desirable to make this statement of facts as few people, and in particular few Americans, have been aware of the events which have occurred. The United States can be proud of having a citizen like Mr. Warren, one who so highly contributes to the artistic glory of his country. Let justice be done him in this matter, not for his sake, but in the name of right, of artistic and historic truth and in memory of Belgium's great Cardinal — one of the Martyrs of the War.

PIERRE DE SOETE,
9 rue de Ligne,
Brussels.



THE LIBERTY BELL OF LOUVAIN

presented by the Engineers of the United States in Memory of the Engineers who gave their lives in the Great War.

NOTRE DAME DES VICTOIRES

Our Lady of Louvain executed by the French Master, Dampt.

The breastplate and helmet are covered by the gold beaten from a five-dollar gold luck piece found upon the body of an American soldier killed in the war, returned with his effects to his mother and by her subscribed to the fund gathered to construct the Library.

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